

## Message Text

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S/S - MR. BRIDGES

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TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (KISSINGER)

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT WASHINGTON POST EDITORIAL WEDNESDAY  
SEPTEMBER 15 HEADED "MR. FORD'S VIETNAM POLICY."

2. THE SECURITY COUNCIL'S SENSIBLE DECISION TO POSTPONE A  
VOTE ON ADMITTING VIETNAM TO THE UNITED NATIONS UNTIL AFTER  
THE AMERICAN ELECTIONS DOES NOT ALTER THE FACT THAT THE FORD  
ADMINISTRATION'S OWN VIETNAM POLICY HAS BEEN RIGID, DECEPTIVE  
AND HARMFUL TO AMERICAN INTERESTS IN THE EXTREME. GRANTED,  
MR. FORD, VYING EARLIER FOR THE REPUBLICAN NOMINATION AND  
NOW FOR THE REAGAN CONSTITUENCY'S VOTE, HAD SOMEHOW TO  
COUNTER MR. REAGAN'S KNOW-NOTHING ATTACK ON HIM FOR INITIAT-  
ING DIPLOMATIC CONTACTS WITH VIETNAM LAST SPRING. THE  
PRESIDENT DID NOT, HOWEVER, HAVE TO LOSE ALL BALANCE AND  
RESTRAINT. HE DID NOT HAVE TO PUBLICLY DENIGRATE VIETNAM'S  
MOVES AND MOTIVES AND, IN PRIVATE, DRAG HIS FEET IN SETTING  
UP NORMALIZATION TALKS. HE COULD HAVE NURSED ALONG A NEGO-  
TIATION POINTED TOWARD GETTING THE UNITED STATES WHAT IT  
MOST WANTS, AN ACCOUNTING OF SERVICEMEN CLASSIFIED MISSING  
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IN ACTION IN VIETNAM. IF HE WISHED TO INSIST THAT THE PARIS

ACCORDS WERE DEAD AND THEREFORE THE UNITED STATES HAD NO FURTHER "OBLIGATION" TO AID VIETNAMESE RECONSTRUCTION, THEN

HE COULD HAVE QUIETLY INVESTIGATED WHETHER SOMETHING OTHER THAN DIRECT AMERICAN AID, SAY, ACCESS TO INTERNATIONAL LOANS, MIGHT HAVE BEEN ACCEPTABLE TO HANOI.

3. UNFORTUNATELY, MR. FORD PLAYED IT ANOTHER WAY. HE CHOSE TO MEET MR. REAGAN'S LOW-ROAD CHALLENGE LAST SPRING WITH A LOW-ROAD RESPONSE, BY PUBLICLY CALLING THE VIETNAMESE "PIRATES," FOR INSTANCE, EVEN WHILE DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS WERE UNDER WAY TO START TALKS WITH THEM ON NORMALIZING RELATIONS. WHEN HANOI IDENTIFIED 12 MIAS A WEEK AGO AS A GOODWILL GESTURE, MR. FORD PERSONALLY SOUGHT OUT THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS CORPS TO DECLARE THAT THE VIETNAMESE WERE "CALLOUS AND CRUEL" IN NOT SUPPLYING MORE NAMES AND INFORMATION; HE OFFERED THE VIETNAMESE NOTHING IN RETURN. WHEN THE VIETNAMESE, NOTWITHSTANDING WASHINGTON'S INSISTENCE THAT IT HAD NO AID "OBLIGATION," ASKED ON AUG. 27 TO WORK OUT A DATE FOR "NORMALIZATION" TALKS TO BEGIN, THE ADMINISTRATION DID NOT RESPOND.

4. INSTEAD, ON MONDAY OF THIS WEEK, IT ANNOUNCED THAT BECAUSE THERE HAD BEEN "NO PROGRESS" IN OBTAINING FULL MIA ACCOUNTING, THE UNITED STATES WOULD VETO HANOI'S APPLICATION FOR U.N. MEMBERSHIP -- THIS DESPITE ITS GENERAL VIEW THAT U.N. MEMBERSHIP SHOULD BE UNIVERSAL. HANOI RESPONDED BY MAKING PUBLIC THE RECORD OF THE PAST YEAR'S DIPLOMACY BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND VIETNAM, FIGURING, CORRECTLY, THAT IT DEMONSTRATES HOW INFLEXIBLE AMERICAN DIPLOMACY HAS BEEN. NEEDLESS TO SAY, PRESIDENT FORD HAS NEVER STOPPED ASSURING THE MIA FAMILIES THAT HE IS DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO GET THE ACCOUNTING THEY CRAVE.

5. HANOI IS A CYNICAL AND CLEVER BARGAINER, SKILLED IN REACHING OUT TO THE AMERICAN PUBLIC WHEN IT ENCOUNTERS RESISTANCE FROM THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT. ONLY CRYBABIES WILL COMPLAIN, HOWEVER. THE UNITED STATES OUGHT TO HAVE THE RESOURCES, AND THE MATURITY, TO HOLD ITS OWN.

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THE MIA INFORMATION IS SOMETHING THE VIETNAMESE HAVE THAT THE UNITED STATES VERY MUCH WANTS. TO CALL THIS MATTER "HUMANITARIAN," AS THOUGH IT WERE NOT A POLITICAL COMMODITY WHICH MUST BE PAID FOR IN APPROPRIATE COIN, IS NOT EVEN VERY CLEVER, LET ALONE CONVINCING. TO GET THE ACCOUNTING, THE UNITED STATES WILL HAVE TO ENTER A NEGOTIATION IN ORDER TO FIND OUT JUST WHAT HANOI'S PRICE IS. IS IT AID? IF SO, IS IT A TOKEN AMOUNT OR A SUBSTANTIAL

AMOUNT? IS IT ACCESS TO INTERNATIONAL LOANS OR ENTRANCE  
INTO INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS? THE FLAW IN  
ADMINISTRATION DIPLOMACY IS THAT, IN REACTING, OR OVER-  
REACTING, TO RONALD REAGAN.S POLITICAL ATTACK, IT HAS

AVOIDED ANYTHING THAT MIGHT BE MADE TO LOOK SOFT-  
HEADED, SUCH AS A NEGOTIATION, WHICH IS THE ONE WAY  
IT CAN FIND OUT THE ANSWER TO THESE QUESTIONS. MEANWHILE,  
MR. FORD TRIES TO PALM OFF ON THE FAMILIES AND THE PUBLIC  
THE MISLEADING CLAIM THAT THE HARD LINE IN HANOI IS ALL  
VIETNAM.S FAULT AND IN NO WAY HIS OWN. END TEXT. ROBINSON

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